

Claims:

1–49. (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) A method of processing segments of a continuous flexible web wherein a length stretch of the web is incrementally advanced under tension to successively feed at least one segment of the web to a web processing station having processing components, said method comprising:

intermittently releasing tension on the length stretch of the web while said at least one segment thereof is at the processing station;

holding each said successive segment of the length stretch of the web using a holder while the segment is positioned at the web processing station;

using the holder to continue continuing to hold the held segment of web at the processing station while allowing the held segment to move relative to adjacent portions of the web due to said released tension on the length of the web, the holder holding said held segment being moveable in an X axis direction of feed of the length stretch of the web to the processing station, in a Y axis direction transverse of the X axis direction of feed of said stretch of the web, and about a θ axis of rotation of the holder perpendicular to said X and Y axis directions;

accurately adjusting the position of the held segment of the web at said processing station prior to processing thereof by subjecting the holder holding said held segment to controlled adjustment motion selected from the group consisting of motion along said X axis, motion along said Y axis, motion in the form of rotation about said θ axis, and simultaneous combinations of said [[such]] motions as required to obtain accurate alignment of the held segment of the web with the processing components at said processing station; and processing each held segment within the station after said accurate adjustment thereof.

51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, wherein the processing components include die cutting elements, and wherein said processing step includes subjecting the held segment of the web at said processing station to die cutting after said accurate adjustment of the position of the held segment of the web such that said held segment is aligned with the die cutting elements.

52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:
providing a shiftable vacuum plate as the holder, the vacuum plate positioned to hold said held segment of the web at the web processing station;
sequentially applying vacuum to the plate to successively hold each said successive [[held]] segment of the web; and
adjusting the position of the plate while holding said held segment of the web to effect said accurate adjustment of said held segment at said processing station.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein said accurately adjusting the position of the held segment of the web at said processing station includes comparing the location of a fixed reference indicium within said station with the location of an indicium carried by said held segment.

54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:
feeding the length stretch of the web in said X direction while maintaining said tension on said length stretch; and
relaxing the tension on said length stretch while said held segment of the web is held at said processing station and during said accurate adjustment of the position of the held segment of the web at said processing station.